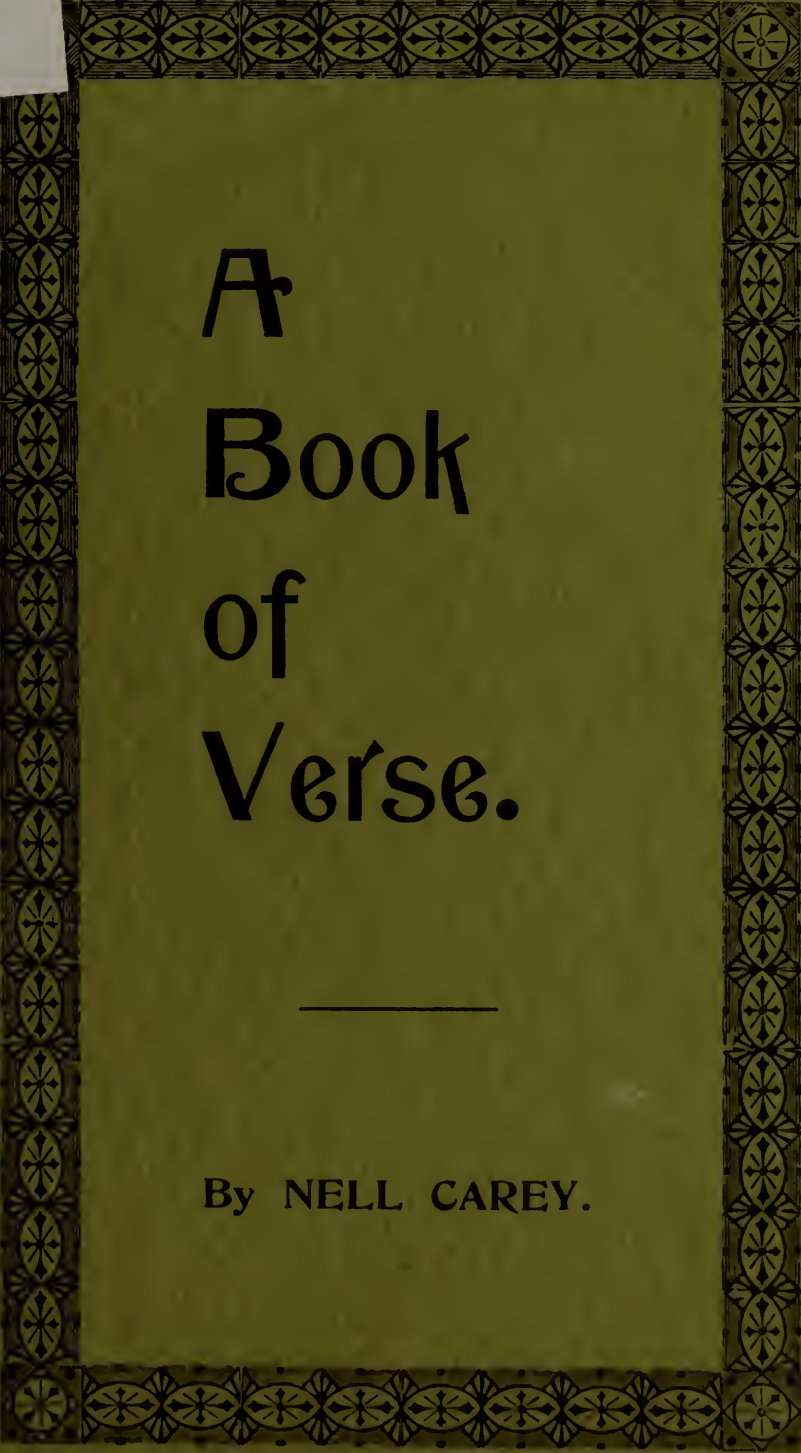


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A Book of Verse.

By NELL CAREY.

THESE VERSES ORIGINALLY APPEARED IN THE
NEW ORLEANS TIMES-DEMOCRAT.

A BOOK OF VERSE.



BY NELL CAREY.



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Dedicated to Elizabeth.

SUNSHINE.

LOVE, for me the sunshine lingers
In the waves of your bright hair,—
In your eyes, so witching-winsome,
On your lips, Dan Cupid's lair.

Love, for me the sunshine lingers
'Neath your fairy dancing feet,
Trembles, as through shattered rainbows,
In your laughter thrilling sweet.

Dear, for me the love-light lingers
On your eyes, your lips, your hair ;
In your footsteps and your laughter,
In your presence everywhere.

So for me the world's in shadow
When I miss you from my side,
And for me there is no sunshine
That your absence does not hide.

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My early dreams seemed all to range
Round thee unknown ;
It seemeth strange,
Strange that thou didst not come.

And yet, methinks, hadst thou been there,
Thou wouldst not then
Have found me fair,
Fair as thou call'st me now.

For I was simply, purely sweet ;
Ungessed the charm
That to my feet,
Laggard, forced thee and Fate,—

Fate that withheld thee through the years
Of summer sunshine,
Smiles and tears,
Tears that were light as dew.

And yet my later love is thine,
A strange new love
That was not mine,
Not mine to give thee then.

Perchance with thee in coming years
I shall unlearn
The doubts and fears,
Fears out of knowledge wrought.



MIMOSA.

NEATH the broadly spreading branches
Of the blossom-crowned Mimosa
Sat a lover, all impassioned,
And his tender amorosa.

“Sweet,” said he, “Mimosa’s blossoms,
Prisoned in their hearts all golden,
Hold the tears of sorrowing maiden—
So doth run the legend olden.”

Once again beneath the branches
Sat the lover and the maiden;
Darkly parting looms before them,
And their hearts are heavy-laden.

Eyes she raised, where teardrops sparkled,
To the flowers bending over,—
Said, “They are the tears of parting!
Say you will return, my lover.”

Now, alas! all lone and lonely,
Sits a maid whose heart is yearning
O’er a lover proven recreant,—
Gone, she knows, past all returning.

Through the perfumed masses stealing
Zephyr whispers to Mimosa,
Creeps a murmur through the branches,
Breathing softly—Dolorosa.

EXORCISED.

WHY comest thou to-night, pale ghost,
To-night, of all nights in the year,
To freeze on my lips the laughter
And fill my heart with fear?

This night I fain would fetter
Thee back in the gloom of the past,
And welcome the joys supernal
That crowd to meet me at last.

When another face smiles upon me
With its beauty, dark and bright,
Why do I see thy deep blue eyes
On this phantom-haunted night?

Why do I hear thy tender voice
Whisper my name as of old,
When the winding sheet of the past
Enfolds thy pulseless heart and cold?

Why do I feel thy clasping hands,
That, like a relentless fate,
Would draw me back to the past again,
Now that it is too late?

I know thou art but the semblance
Of what is forever fled,
The poor, pale wraith of affection,
The ghost of a love that is dead.

Which, like the dead and forgotten,
Steals from its sealed tomb
To come and reproach the living,
Who would fain shut out the gloom.
Back to the shades whence thou camest,
And return no more to the light ;
Thou art laid at last forever,
And I will be glad to-night.

A SOUL.

I LISTENED to the ~~mocking~~-bird's song—
Listened with bated breath
To that thrilling song that was sweet as love,
And as sorrowful as death.
Heard all the passionate longing
Of a soul which has felt and known
All the joy of love's completeness,
And the grief of being alone.
And I said to my heart, this song bird
Of our glowing Southern clime
Must hold a soul in its keeping
That was human in long-past time,—
A soul that had loved and suffered,
But lacked expression complete,
And has learned at last Love's language
In this midnight music sweet.

THE WHITE MOTH.

'T'WIXT lattice bars, on summer night,
Fluttered a moth of purest white ;
A dainty, fragile, airy thing,
Poised on palpitating wing.

Fair as a flake of unsoiled snow,
Or winged blossom that did grow
Pale in some shadow-haunted dell,
Close where the tumbling streamlet fell.

Dainty as dawning maidenhood,
In 'kerchief folded, milk-white snood
Veiling the eyes, so dark and bright
They seem a fragment of the night.

Or, like some spirit fond, denied
The rest celestial, since it sighed
For earth's sweet restlessness and pain,
And longed to love and grieve again.

Anon, it seemed a carrier dove
Bearing a message from my love,
A sweet assurance, calm and deep,
Into my fevered heart to creep.

But, whether blossom, snowflake, dove,
Maiden or spirit faint for love,
It filled my heart with visions pure
That strangely did my fancy lure.

And as it rested on my hand
Vaguely I seemed to understand
The message that its wings had caught,
And from the summer darkness brought.

PREMONITION.

I DREAMED I saw a sail last night,
A far-off, glistening thing,
That tossed on the sea, where breakers be
And waves their foam-wreaths fling.

Freighted with hope's fruition,
And shining dreams come true,
And on the deck, the veriest speck,
I dreamt, Love, I saw you.

And something whispered to me,
" 'Tis thy ship thou seest afar,
And joy will be in its coming for thee,
If it once can pass the bar."

With straining eyes I watched it
As it struggled with wind and sea,
And I prayed that it might thro' storm and night
Be guided safe to me.

Then I saw the sea would conquer,
And my trembling heart took flight
O'er the maddened waves, where the storm
fiend raves,
And sank with my ship in the night.

SATISFIED.

LOVE came to me in springtime,
A rosy, dancing sprite ;
And I felt the joy of living
And I laughed with pure delight.
With winsome grace he led me
To the dewy fields of May,
Where the first faint violets blossom
And the pale, sweet snowdrops sway.
I looked in his eyes' clear azure,
Then turned from him and sighed ;
For their mirthful, childish sweetness
Left my heart unsatisfied.

With the coming of the summer
Came Love again to me ;
Gracious and proud and tender—
No youth so fair as he:
He led me where the flowers
Bloomed in beauty everywhere,
And birds with songs of rapture
Made tremulous the air.
I listened to his honeyed words,
Then turned from him and sighed :
With all their subtle flattery, they
Left my heart unsatisfied.

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With the chilling winds of autumn
Once again did Love draw near :
Thick the shadows lay around us,
And without was dark and drear.
Not a child, nor yet a stripling,
But a man, in earnest-wise,
Taking both my hands and saying,
"Sweetheart, look into my eyes."
Looking, breathed I Spring's soft perfume,
Felt the Summer's glowing pride ;
And I leaned toward him and answered,
"Dearest, I am satisfied."

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY.

BEHOLD a temple glowing bright,
Whose marble halls are all bedight
With gems that gleam before the sight
 Bewilderingly ;
And yet, within those glittering walls,
Strange footsteps echo down the halls,
While never gleam of sunlight falls
 Enlighteningly.
Deep in the inmost part enshrined,
A grewsome idol, deaf and blind,
Fearsome and dark and serpent-twined,
 Sits broodingly.

Beside it stands a ruin gray,
Round which no tender sunbeams play,
Its towers sinking to decay,
 All patiently.
Within there rules a spirit fair,
Whose gentle presence fills the air
With perfume sweet and music rare,
 Enchantingly,
And flowers their odorous censers sway,
And laughing fountains ever play
Where forms of light and beauty stray
 So joyously.

THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF
HIS MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY
CHARLES THE FIRST
BY
JAMES HALLAM, ESQ.
OF THE MIDDLE TEMPLE, ESQ.
IN PARLIAMENT
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1685.

Within a perfect body, where
All charms unite to make it fair,
A darksome soul hath made its lair,
Most loathsomely.

A creature formed to charm the eyes,
Glowing with youth's prismatic dyes,
Resplendent, decked in jeweled lies
Alluringly,—

And yet an idol, deaf and blind,
Brooding and dark and serpent-twined,
Holds rule these graces fair behind,
Most brutally.

Another form from which men turn,
Which artists all and poets spurn,
Toward which no human love doth yearn
Devotedly.

Yet close within that house of clay
A radiant soul hath found its way,
And holds its graceful, gracious sway
Right royally.

And, like sweet incense, from that breast
Rise songs of praise and hope and rest,
Making it blessed of the blest,
Eternally.

HYPNOSIS.

GAZE on this slow-moving disc,
Mark the rays of lambent light
Grow more luminously bright,
Till thy soul is merged in sight,
And thou shalt alone delight
In that sense.

Veil the eyes, reluctant lids ;
Purple shadows seem to fall
Round about thee like a pall,
From the void low voices call,
How they weirdly rise and fall,
Cadenced.

Heavy torpor rest on thee,
Drowsier, weaker, laxer grow,
Till sleep's darkling flood shall flow
Into veins that pulse more slow,
And shall quench the spirit's glow
By its might.

Now thine essence seems to float
Poised above a misty sea ;
O'er thy head incessantly
Clouds all lightning riven flee,
Whence my voice shall summon thee
To my side.

When my will shall lift the charm
Which doth now thine eyelids hold,
Thou shalt love me, as of old
Men enmeshed in nets of gold
Loved the sirens, in whose mold
I am cast.

In the mystery of mine eyes,
As on an illumined scroll,
Thou shalt see thy very soul
Blent with mine, while o'er it roll
Feelings past our own control,
Or regret.

Thou shalt struggle not nor sigh
To release thy soul from mine ;
Captive, by this mystic sign
Now I trace in strange design,
In my life I fold up thine
Utterly.

Round us reel the toppling spheres ;
Groping spirit, fly to me !
Lo, thou comest ! now I see,—
Leaps my heart exultingly :
Thou art mine eternally,
Wholly mine !

UNDERSTOOD.

NO word was spoken between us,
Never a look or a sigh,
To show Love's dream was over
And the parting hour nigh.

Why should we reason and question
As lingering hand clasped hand?
The hearts that had beat to one measure
Could easily understand.

What, though we knew this parting
Meant good-bye for all the years,
The heart's deepest anguish is silent,
And despair melts not in tears.

Farewell is sad when spoken
With reluctant lips and eyes,
But sadder, a thousand times sadder,
Are the questionless, silent good-byes.

"Good-bye!" When the heart is aching
With its pent-up weight of woe,
Understanding and mutely saying,
"I know that 'tis better so."

"Better that we should sever,
Since Fate hath ruled it so."
Yet eyes and lips reject their task,
Lest the feet refuse to go.

“Good-bye!” and all is over
In the space of a hurried breath ;
We have understood, and are parted
As surely as if by death.

WHY ?

IT happened 'neath the mistletoe
Upon a Christmas long ago,
And when the reason she would know
He closer leaned and whispered low,
“Because, sweetheart, I love you so”—
Blue eyes and brown more earnest grow,
“You know, dear heart, I love you so.”

Gone is the Yuletide's cheery glow,
In fern-lined haunts the violets grow ;
Again the culprit's head droops low,
As swings the lazy hammock slow,
“Forgive me, dear, I love you so”—
And she forgives, I almost know,
Because, you see, he loves her so.

PSYCHE.

I LOVE, I love,—Ah woe is me:—
With my whole soul's intensity;
Yet, passing strange, a wondrous thing—
I ne'er have seen my lord, my king.

Whispers I've heard, so vague and sweet,
My spirit's wings have wildly beat
Against their tenement of clay,
Longing with him to flee away.

Dreaming, I seem to see his face,
Replete with living youth and grace,
And then to dream, so sweet it seems
That day's an interlude 'twight dreams.

* * * * *

Thrilled with music's throbbing measure,
At the tender close of day
I have felt his glowing spirit
All my wayward impulse sway.

In the moonlight's silver aura,
And in perfume's subtle breath,
In the bitter-sweet of living,
And the mystery of death,—

In the sunset's golden glory
I have wondrous visions seen,
Which proclaimed to me my master
And crowned me as his queen.

* * * * *

At last by reason's searching light
I saw my god-like love aright,
When, soon as seen, the vision bright
Faded forever from my sight.

Ah, cruel reason! cruel light!—
Plunging my soul in deepest night,
In thy cold radiance despite,
Oh, enemy to dear delight!

'Twas Love himself,—ah, now I know
That there exists not here below
That which doth drive me to and fro,
Forcing me lonely still to go.

SLEEPING LOVE.

DEEP in my heart Dan Cupid slumbering lay,
Oblivious of life's vexing hopes and fears,
Held in a charmed, dreamless trance away,
Lost utterly to joy, or pain, or tears.

So wondrous soft he slept, so lax and still
He lay, I scarce remembered he was there.
My life flowed on, like some unshadowed rill,
'Twixt narrow banks, unfretted, smooth and fair.

Loved roused not, tho' the year's soft ripples played
About his drowsy, lotus-wreathed head;
Too soon exulting this proud boast I made,—
"The Tyrant is not sleeping, he is dead!"

* * * * *

One Autumn day I held a hand in mine,
The clasping hand of one I'd counted friend;
He strove to lightly go and make no sign,
Fearing the mutual silken bond to rend.

Above our heads a chill and threatening breath
Stirred in the restless pines and whispered low,
And breathed of "Parting, Losing, Death,—
Winter and parting, flowers entombed in snow."

I gazed deep into eyes which spoke
Such pent-up woe despite myself I wept,
And then, refreshed from sleep, Love woke,
Ten-fold more strong that he had slept.

GLAMOUR.

A NIGHT of radiant moonlight,
Filled with the perfumed sighs
Of honeysuckle blossoms,
And the rose before it dies.

A lover, all impassioned,
Kissing a snowy hand,
And swearing that his lady
Is fairest in the land.

A promise breathed in the glamour,
A dainty face bent low
To hide the rosy blushes
That swiftly come and go.

A sigh at the hour of parting,—
A whispered, "Don't forget,"—
A little wrench of the heartstrings,—
A subtle touch of regret.

A morrow of garish sunlight,
A questioning of the heart,—
The moon's brief magic broken,
And two lives far apart.

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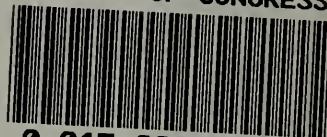
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